



## **Men Against Violence Against Women**

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Dr. Russell Foote, *CHAIRMAN*. Donald Berment, *SECRETARY*. Desmond Persad, *TREASURER*.



### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.**

On behalf of **Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW)**, we the undersigned, would firstly like to thank the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development for giving us this opportunity to contribute to the resolution of this burning issue, **Domestic Violence** at the Micro Level, **Gender Based Violence** at the Mezzo Level and **Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development** at the Macro Level.

At the **Micro Level**, Domestic Violence has been and continues to make family life stressful and dysfunctional for children, teenagers, and adults in the affected families at the Primary Level of the Ripple Effect Theory (RET), eventually affecting neighbouring communities, the Secondary Level of (RET) and finally affecting the National Community and Government at the Tertiary Level of (RET). This theory is submitted on the CD attached, along with the other references in the Report.

At the **Mezzo Level**, Gender Based Violence, a front burner in the development stage by academics and elsewhere, mainly Civil Society, expands Violence to women, men and children, by paying attention to the manner in which Violence is perpetrated by Institutions, Policies, Rules, Procedures and Practices, Acts of Parliament and other instruments designed for the development of societies. The affect is then experienced in the physical, emotional and spiritual domains.

A critical and consistent analysis at the **Macro Level**, Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development is the way forward and holds the key to the eventual reduction and elimination of Violence in Society.

Enclosed within, is a comprehensive organizational counselling, support and research profile (CSR) of **Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW)**, a non-governmental organization, with Charitable Body Status, which has been working with people as individuals and in communities, across Trinidad and Tobago since 1994, registering as a non-profit company in 1998 and today, up to date with its Annual Returns and Income Tax Statements.

To this end, the document/status report highlights the service oriented philosophy of **MAVAW**, its innovative sustainable structure, the organizational objectives, various outreach strategies and efforts and the major contributions of 2 Directors, Dr. Foote and Donald Berment and 1 Formal Management member, Dr. Robert Lee Moultrie. The list of work done by members like David Law, Johnny Bharath, the 2 other first members of **MAVAW**; Dr. George Gowrie and Dr. Lennox Grant, is long and will be referenced on the CD with the Report, where possible.

**MAVAW's** contribution to child, adolescent and family empowerment, is positioned within a **Community Development Framework**, in both an operational and development fashion. The Organizational Structure of **MAVAW** is crafted to allow participation at 3 Levels, **High Profile, Formal and Activist**, which facilitates faster decision making and a consultative approach, alongside real opportunity for its sustainable development.

**MAVAW's** outreach responses to groups and communities have been stymied by an inability to offer on its own violation, workshops, programs and interventions, as a result of inadequate finances. However, individual members, have been self financing numerous outreaches on their own and together with other members.

In addition, through intense commitment, sheer will, intellectual, social and emotional capital, our members have been and continue to reach the parties in dysfunctional relationships, in different parts of Trinidad and Tobago and to Magistrate Courts, requesting reports on Domestic Violence matters, before them.

**MAVAW** is a man's organization, but has women as friends and consultants. Over the years, we have identified Acts of Parliament which need closer attention to fully encompass Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Said Acts have been noted and the concerns expressed in the following pages and added as references on the CD.

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

The reduction and eventual elimination of **Domestic Violence**, requires development of all sectors of the economy, in a manner that redounds to the benefit of individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

This is a critical requirement in order to provide support for households/families to reduce the impact of other factors, on the propensity to be violent and for building the **self-esteem** of all under purview, so that we will all be literate enough, to be our brothers and sisters keepers.

As a result, MAVAW proposes the following:

1. The adoption of an understanding of **Development** that prioritizes competency building of individuals, groups, organizations and communities in various spheres like, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, sports, agriculture, business and technical-vocational. (Dr. Foote).
2. Revitalization and rebuilding of communities, using institutional and implementation frameworks that are driven by the **ideas of people** living in such areas. This will bring greater participation of teenagers, adults and households in such communities. (Dr. Foote).
3. Return fully to **Community Policing**, which provides a great opportunity for Police Officers to build healthy relationships between households and their members.
4. Alignments between development of Child Care, Youth, Ageing and Family Development Policies, introducing an **Infant to Toddler Partnership Programme (ITTPP)** like the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP).
5. Putting **Community Building Efforts** at the **Centre** of the **National Development Agenda**, bearing in mind that communities are made up of households and the realization that **development** at this level would provide a more solid platform for **literacy building and violence reduction**.

6. Introduction of a **Family Research and Development Centre** as an independent and autonomous body staffed by a Director and eight researchers and guided by best practice policies.
7. Introduction of a **Nationwide Male Empowerment Program**, offering Workshops and Training, nurturing Family Days on a Quarterly Basis.
8. Appointment of a **National Family Council/Board**, with responsibility for developing a **National Family Policy**, research and data driven interventions and development programs, targeting all family types in Trinidad and Tobago.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signed  .....Dr. Russell Foote, Chairman.

  
Signed .....Donald Berment, Secretary/Counsellor.

*Company No M 1799(95) Charitable Status No F (BUD):7/4/205*

## INTRODUCTION

In the Subtitle to this Report the **Composition and Terms of Reference** of the **Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development** was recorded for ease of reference. **MAVAW's** **Terms of Rererence** is derived from this Committee's **FIRST INQUIRY**, quoted immediately below.

- i) Describe the various programmes and services offered by you organization. Are there any services for families and children? Are there any services available for men?
- ii) What are the major challenges facing your programmes and services related to domestic violence?
- iii) What are the major achievements of your programmes and services related to domestic violence?
- iv) Are the staff of your organisation adequately trained to handle domestic violence cases?
- v) Is there an adequate level of security available at your organisation?
- vi) Does your organisation possess a confidentiality policy to safeguard victims of domestic violence?
- vii) Does your organisation provide outreach services/follow up services in communities?
- viii) Has anything been done to encourage male victims of domestic violence to come forward?
- ix) Has anything been done to change the stigma that only women are victims of domestic violence?
- x) Could you describe/outline the process for treating with a domestic violence case?
- xi) What has been your organization's experience on the impact of domestic violence on the family and children?



- xii) Do stakeholders meet on a regular basis to discuss programmes and services regarding domestic violence?
- xiii) Do the stakeholders share information and collaborate on plans and actions and programmes in order to ensure no duplicity and waste of resources?
- xiv) What is required to improve the level of support for victims of domestic violence?
- xv) What are the sources of income that provide support for the operationalization of your services/programmes?

The above mentioned **15 Focus areas** will be expanded in the **Body** of the document, where not identified elsewhere in the **Report**. Most importantly, **MAVAW** having been actively involved with and fully participating in the **Violence Reduction Movement** since 1994, a period of **21 years and 5 months** to date, providing experienced **counselling, support and developmental research**, free in most instances; our submission is comprehensive and involves a discussion on the 3 Levels of **Sustainable Development**, the **Micro Level**, the **Mezzo Level** and the **Macro Level**, already mentioned in our **Executive Summary** and fuelled by our first outreach presentation in 1994, **The Ripple Effect Theory**, giving full appreciation and value to the fact that everything impacting in/on the **Family Environment**, negative or positive, eventually **ripples** into the **Immediate Community** and finally into the **National Community**.

**Sustainable development** is a process for meeting human development goals while sustaining the ability of natural systems to continue to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend. While the modern concept of sustainable development is derived most strongly from the 1987 Brundtland Report, it is rooted in earlier ideas about sustainable forest management and twentieth century environmental concerns.

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for sustaining finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet. It is a process that envisions a desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resource-use continue to meet human needs without undermining the "integrity, stability and beauty" of natural biotic systems. (Wikipedia)

To fully understand **Violence In Society**, especially **Violence Against Women**, it has to be placed in a holistic context, which encompasses the **Physical, Psychological and Spiritual** aspects of our existence as human beings, in this God created space and the lifestyles of men and women, individually and in relationships, with themselves, with others, both significant and casual and the environment.

God's **Primary** gifts to us, as children of God, every single son and daughter, born to humankind, can be listed as the **3 P's Opportunities**:-

- **Procreation**
- **Protection**
- **Provision**, in any order, being involved in any one or more than one, each to his/her own choice and level of personality development.

The most poignant and long lasting example of the **resistance** to this violence, has been seen by the life and death of Jesus Christ, the first man over 2,000 years ago, who chose to believe in his spiritual and physical connection to God as a Parent, prepared for and died a painful death, thereby saving his earthly mother, Mary, from an even more painful death, as an adulterous, promiscuous woman of that time, which was a public stoning, until death.

In addition to this example of **resistance**, we also recorded the first **3-Point Separation**, of the type of abuse, which occurs in all instances, i.e.

- **Direct Abuse** (to the individual)
- **Indirect Abuse** (to their loved ones)
- **Spiritual Abuse** (disrespect for spiritual belief to all others).

The **First Limitation** we have to contend with, in understanding **Violence In Society**, is the fact that, **Violence is acceptable** in 2 situations, i.e.

- In **Combat Mode** (war)
- In **Self Defence Mode**, but only when the **4** following conditions exist, i.e.
  - The threat to you is **immediate**.
  - You must be in genuine **fear** of an attack.
  - You **cannot escape** from the threat.
  - The **force** you use to defend yourself must be **reasonable**.

To further contextualize **Violence In Society** and its consequent **resistance** to and/or **Movement For Change**, which can be viewed in 3 Phases, i.e.

- **Phase One—The First Movement**, which was mainly social in nature, radical in action and focusing only on **Direct Violence** to women, being perpetrated only by men, very Gender Biased in practice.
- **Phase Two—The Second Movement**, introduced **Domestic Violence Legislation** and was therefore social and legal in nature, persistent in action, attempting to achieve **Gender Neutrality** and accepting **Indirect** as well as **Direct Violence**, happening in **Relationships**, at one and the same time.
- **Phase Three—The Third Movement**, the place where we are now, where **Gender Based Violence** is the subject head, where biological, sociological, spiritual and age determinants, impact on solutions, where we are decisive about a **Gender Neutrality** going



towards mainstreaming in rules, procedures, policies and practices, where **Models for Violence In Relationships**, are **Gender Neutral** in nature and **Models** for top management in societies are **Gender Equitable** in nature, where a **Parliament**, maybe the First one in the world, has a **Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development**, inquiring into the programmes and services which provide support to victims of **Domestic Violence** and with the **Terms of Reference** of this **Committee**, very forward looking to say the least and a Best Practice Democratic Policy to say the most, notwithstanding, the genuine attempt to achieve a **Gender Equitable Composition** in its nature, 6 men and 4 women, with a woman as the Chairman. A job well done.

As a consequence of the developmental work done in the discipline of Architecture, in an effort to improve Shelter and Settlement Development, including **Violence Reduction**, the natural progression was to use psycho-social learning from research, in a vehicle best suited for outreach and consequently the Organization MAVAW.

**THIS IS A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE ORGANIZATION MAVAW.**

**Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW)**, could be considered to have had a Natural Birth, in that it was a man's idea, put forward and accepted at a forum to deal with rising crime in 1994, hosted by a Feminist Organization, called **The National Women's Caucus (NWC)**. Said idea was to have a **Crime Committee** made up of **concerned men** in society, focusing on **violent male behaviour** and **developing strategies to reduce and eventually stop this male behaviour**.

After functioning for about **nine months** within The National Women's Caucus, the Crime Committee developed into the organization **"Men Against Violence Against Women"** and thereafter, **MAVAW** became an active participant in the **"Men's Movement"**, joining the fifty (50) year old International Men's Movement and the budding Caribbean

Movement, which was **started in Jamaica in 1991**, with the **Fathers' Incorporated Organization**.

**MAVAW** is a **Proactive way** to take responsibility for **Male Violence** and to contribute towards the creation of a Violent Free Society, i.e. --

1. It puts **Concerned men to Work** and to identify with **Problem Solving**.
2. It allows men trying to **Change**, to achieve **Success**, by **Working** to help others.
3. It tries to reach men in **Denial**, who still live in **Violent Relationships**, by offering them **Support** and a way out.

**MAVAWISM** therefore, is the ***Pursuit of Equal Rights with Consequent Appreciation for the Differences between the Sexes, Utilizing the Principle of Equity and with an Accent on Bringing Paternal Care back into the Home wherever it is Lacking.***

**MAVAW's MISSION** is ***to reduce in the first instance and eventually eradicate unacceptable violence in society, with an emphasis on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women, using a multi-disciplinary approach, focusing on correcting behaviour skill and belief system deficits.***

**MAVAW** REGISTERED as a ***Non-Profit Company (M 1799 95)*** in August of **1998** and has **three (3) First Directors**, namely: -

- |                       |                    |            |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. CHRISTOPHER HOLDER | POLICE OFFICER     | CHAIRMAN.  |
| 2. DONALD BERMENT     | HOUSING SPECIALIST | SECRETARY. |
| 3. DESMOND PERSAD     | ACCOUNTANT         | TREASURER. |

**Fiscal Year—1<sup>st</sup> July—to—30<sup>th</sup> June.**

Over the period **February 1994 to date—July 1999**, **MAVAW** has recorded **381 Outreach Activities/Efforts**, spanning the full spectrum of **Social Activism**, the most high profile are: --

1. Campaign to have our **Annual Male Awareness Week in December** and our **Annual Fathers' Week in June**, declared International Events on the United Nations Calendar.
2. Promotion of an **Annual Gender Sensitive Calypso Competition**, in order to make full use of our major Cultural Entertainment Season, in our Quest for a Violent Free Society.
3. Campaign to build the **First Transitional Home For Men** In Change Mode.

The Constitution of **MAVAW** is on the attached CD with this Report, along with the other relevant documents describing **MAVAW**, its work and answering the 15 questions in our Terms of Reference.

#### **HERE ARE A FEW HISTORY MILESTONES OF **MAVAW**.**

**1994** Presentation of the Ripple Effect Theory (RET) on Crime at the Chamber of Commerce National Consultation on Crime, held in the Queen's Hall.

Sat on a Committee to support Senator Diana Mahabir Wyatt's Presentation to the Senate on the Unremunerated Work Bill.

**1995** Presentation of a 3—Line Paper on Domestic Violence, in Room 101, UWI's Engineering Building, said paper promoting the concept of Full Cycle Human Resource Management.

Holistic support to then Member of Parliament Ms. Hulsie Bhaggan, for 1 year, because she was alleging that Psychological violence was being done to her.

**1996** Review and recommendations submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Settlements, on our Country's Report, to the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, Turkey.

Initiation of the First Male Awareness week in December, in

collaboration with the then Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs.

Other information on CD.

**1997** Sat on a Cabinet Appointed Ad Hoc Committee, to review the 1991 Domestic Violence Act and to make recommendations to correct the problems, experienced by persons using said Act.

First ever Fathers Week Celebrations, held in June, with co-host Power 102 FM Radio.

Other information on CD.

**1998** Attended the International Association of Community Police Officers (IAPCRO's) 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference at the Trinidad Hilton, titled Embracing the Youth Through Community Policing and delivered a presentation titled The Game of Violence and the Youth Psyche.

Celebrated the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fathers Week, with a Father's Fiesta Exhibition on Brian Lara Promenade, co-hosted with the newly formed Fathers Who Care, non governmental group.

Other information on CD.

**1999** Promotion of the First ever Gender Sensitive Calypso Competition, in order to introduce a new challenge to our local artists, utilizing our major cultural entertainment season.

Planning the publication and distribution of a 65 page Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook, edited by our first Chairman, Police Officer Christopher, which was distributed in 2002 and now revised in PDF format on the CD and in our Cloud Archive [www.archive .org](http://www.archive.org). Type donald berment and mavaw in search boxes.

I left Trinidad to go Canada in November. During my stay, completed a 5-month developmental research project titled Violence Reduction Strategies in a Large Multicultural, Racially/Tribally Diverse Country—again using the RET Model. Also planned with the White Ribbon Campaign Team, their first ever Dad Walk, which is celebrated annually on the 15<sup>th</sup> June, this year being their 15<sup>th</sup>.

Other information on CD.

**2000** Spent 6 months in an Urban Environment, Eastside Plaza, Charlotte Street, preparing and collecting preliminary data for a study titled Examining The Role of Intimacy and Violence in Spousal relationships and its Impact on Poverty in an Urban Environment. Lack of funds prohibited full development of this project, which had 3 components.

Attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Men's Day Celebration at Palms Club, San Fernando, on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> day of November. This day is now celebrated worldwide; go to the site below for data.

[www.internationalmensday.org](http://www.internationalmensday.org).

Celebrated UN World Aids Day, giving a 3 day Lecture Series, to the Form 1-3 students at Curepe Junior Secondary School.

Other information on CD.

**2001** Desktop published the book Parenting Without Tears, a 2 part handbook which teaches how to bring up children without the introduction of violence in their lives, which is on the CD and our Cloud archive and a Healthy Relationships Curriculum, by Canadians.

**2002** Distributed our Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook to every Judge and Master of the High Court, Justice of the Peace, Magistrates, Libraries, Parliamentarians, Media Houses, many NGO's

Calypsonians, to name a few.

Proposed the implementation of the Healthy Relationships Curriculum in all Primary and Secondary schools, with a request to the UWI Guild of Students to consider its use on Campus, either in the standard curriculum of all courses and or a mandatory course for Guild members. Our DV Handbook is also there, available to all.

**2003** introduced the BSD Syndrome Concept, a Gender Neutral Model to analyze behaviour in dysfunctional relationships, the future in our view, of Domestic Violence analysis and discussion and as an alternative to the much used Duluth Model, which has been heavily condemned, in some quarters and started a Bumper Sticker Programme, using our most poignant One Liners, courtesy ICHRIS Industries Ltd.

Sat on a Cabinet Appointed Multi-Disciplinary Committee, agreed to in June 2003, to examine the Status of the Institution of the Family in Trinidad and Tobago at the Ministry of Social Development and submitted our Report in August 2004

The rest of the years to date will be detailed in the body of our Report. Suffice it to say that the most important Laws, which need a closer examination, are as follows:-

- The Domestic Violence Act, 1999 to make it fully Gender Neutral and empower Domestic Violence Counsellors, approved by Parliament or the relevant Ministry, to play a more active role in the resolution of Domestic Violence matters. At present, DV Counsellors can only appear in Court when they are required to present a report on matters before the Magistrate. This will be further explained later.
- The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is in



Contravention of Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights namely:-

**Article 6.**

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

When no mention of the female gender is made throughout its content. In addition, the opportunity to bring more young persons to the political environment can be enhanced by lowering the age to be a President and a Senator. Of course a Gender Equitable Parliament Model is yet to be considered by all and sundry...Explained later and on the CD as my 2013 Suggestions for Constitutional Reform.

- The Liquor Act, Chapter 84.10, Part V of the Act, Powers of Licensees, Sect 35 Subsection (1) which reads:-

The authority given to any person by any licence in respect of any premises shall extend in respect of such premises, to his servant, or his wife, a member of his family resident with him.

At present, throughout the 8 Licencing Districts, wives, family members and servants/agents of Licence Holders, approximately 80,000 persons, cannot appear before Magistrates at Liquor Licence Hearings. This has been challenged since February 2014 and not yet opinioned by the Solicitor General. Further explained and shown as Gender Based Violence by a State Institution.

- The National Board Institution is having great difficulty providing timely benefits when due and this after a claim of over 15 Billion in assets. This explained in greater detail in the body of the Report is Gender Based Violence.

- At present persons, 60 years and over, receiving pensions in excess of \$5,000 per month, still have to pay tax on this hard earned income after already paying tax during their work life. In addition, if such persons are employed again in any State or private Institution, their pension is considered income and added to the current salary. This is Financial Abuse and impacts on the behaviour in relationships. My recommendation is for the approval by Cabinet that all pensions, totaling \$15,000, shall not be considered income for annual tax return compilation, making it applicable to persons over 60 years of age, requiring a change in level of Personal Allowances for said persons.
- Finally, having served as the Personal Assistant to a Minister and Member of Parliament for 4 years and 4 months, I have seen the need to equip these hard working members of society with enough Support Staff to them to function at maximum efficiency. In addition, there seems to be problem also with staffing at the Comptroller of Accounts, as reports of long wait for Gratuity Payments is another type of Gender Based Violence by Institutions.

This Report is structured to give Title, Subtitle, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Introduction, the Body Explanation and Conclusion with the consequent Appendices.

A CD will be supplied providing PDF data on the relevant matters discussed along with the Introductions of Dr. Russell Foote, Donald Berment and Dr. Robert Moultrie. Email versions of all and sundry is also being sent to the Secretary of the Joint Select Committee.